

#6) THE SPILLWAY

This short side trail leads to a spillway. If you look to your left, you may see people fly fishing for brook trout, rainbow trout, and large mouth bass. Of course, all must follow park rules and regulations for fresh water fishing at Southaven Park. A New York State fishing license is required. If you hear a ruckus created in the underbrush on your way, that may be a Rufous-sided Towhee. This bird is known for its rust-orange flanks, in contrast with its black back and white stomach. They are so noisy because when in search of insects, they scratch the leaf litter with both feet simultaneously.

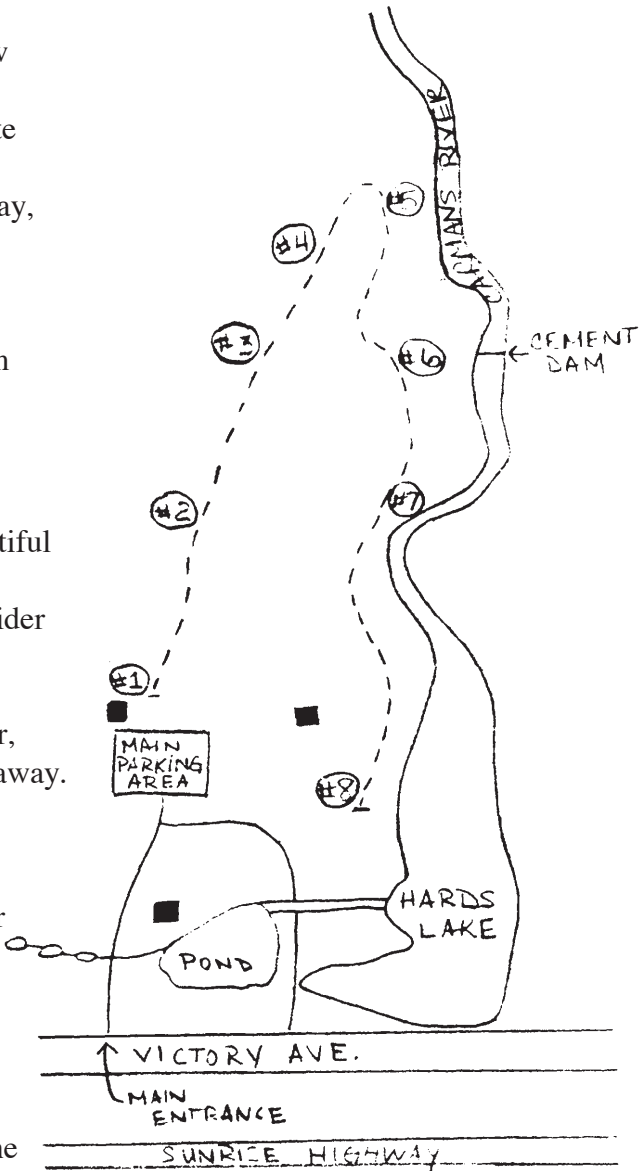
#7) SCENIC VISTA OF THE RIVER

Here is a cozy place to relax and get a beautiful view of the river at the same time. Look closely, and you will probably see water strider insects skating on the surface of the water. Although their dark bodies and long legs camouflage them against the shadowy water, the rings they create in the river give them away.

#8) DAM

Here you will get your last view of the river on this trail. You will see a dam that was constructed to enhance the river waters for fishing. In addition to the fish mentioned earlier, you may also find brown trout, bluegills, and perch in the Carmans River. The trout of Southaven Park have peaked the interest of several historic figures, including Senator Daniel Webster, who, in the 1820's, fished the Carmans frequently with well-known friends such as Martin Van Buren.

TRAIL MAP



■ = RESTROOMS

43-0241P 2/12RY

SOUTHAVEN COUNTY PARK NATURE TRAIL GUIDE

The trail you are about to take will lead you into a typical Northern Pine-Oak forest. At the outskirts you will see mainly red, white, and scrub oak trees along with a huckleberry understory. As you venture deeper into the woods, there will be a greater number of pine trees characteristic of the Long Island Pine Barrens.

The Carmans River flows southward through Southaven County Park towards the eastern end of the Great South Bay. Along its banks you will find Red Maple, Skunk Cabbage, and pleasantly fragrant Sweet Pepperbush.



SUFFOLK
COUNTY
PARKS

Steven Bellone
Suffolk County Executive



These woods provide natural habitat for many different creatures. You may want to look for the tracks of some of these animals during your hike.



RACCOON

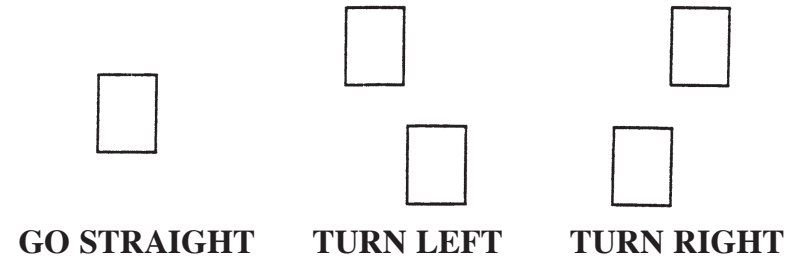


FOX



DEER

Along your hike you will be following white rectangular blazes. These blazes are painted on the tree trunks, on the tight-hand side of the trail.



Be sure to look for the numbered station markers which correspond to the trail guide descriptions listed below.

#1) OAK WOODS

As you enter this portion of the forest, you can see that it is dominated by oaks and a huckleberry shrub understory. Within Southaven Park several different varieties of oak can be found, including white, black and scrub. Look around and you will see a fairly mature forest, with very few pine trees. Because there have been no recent fires, the oaks have taken over this part of the woods allowing few pines to grow. Here, the oaks provide a fairly open canopy, letting some light filter through to the floor.

As you continue your hike, be sure not to miss the white blazes on the right-hand side of the trail.

#2) SANDY SOIL

If you look down at the trail, you will notice that the soil is extremely sandy. This type of soil accommodates pine trees successfully, where some other trees may not fare as well. Because the soil is so sandy, it allows water to percolate down to the aquifer (water reservoir) and it is filtered by these sands. In this manner, our drinking water supplies are purified and replenished.

#3) NATURE RECYCLING

Similar to ourselves, the forest has its own way of recycling. Right in front of you and all around, you will see fallen trees. Even though these trees are now dead, they are still very useful. Their decomposition returns nutrients back into the ecosystem. Small organisms in the soil consume organic material on the forest floor and as the materials deteriorate further, humus is created. These trees are useful in another fundamental way. They provide homes for many of the wild creatures of these woods, such as squirrel, many birds, and chipmunks.

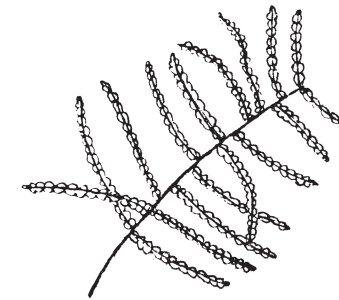
#4) FIRE CLIMAX ECOSYSTEMS

As you look at the charred trunks of the pine trees, you can see evidence of fire. Believe it or not, occasional fire is necessary for pines to survive. As a forest matures, deciduous trees like oaks will gradually replace the pines. However, forest fires retard this natural succession. Pines, with their fire-resistant bark, may survive fires while other species are eliminated. Fire also releases minerals from the burned materials, making a natural fertilizer for the seedlings.

As you continue, you will start to see an abundance of sweet fern. Don't be deceived by its name! Although its leaves are fern-like, it is not a fern at all, but a flowering plant related to the Bay Berry.

Don't miss the blaze to go straight at the crossroads!

SWEET FERN



#5) WETLAND INDICATOR PLANTS

As you venture further towards the river, you will start to see plants indicating water is nearby. Skunk cabbage is abundant here, as well as cinnamon fern, and some red maple. The colonists used to call skunk cabbage "Bear-weed" because of the tasty meal it provided bears after hibernation.



SKUNK CABBAGE

Both ferns and mosses alike thrive in the moist, nutrient rich soils along the river so unlike that of the sandy soil seen earlier.

After this point, you will begin to see small paths off to your left which lead to the river.